

Background This poem by Edward Field (born 1924) presents a new version of a famous character in literature, the monster brought to life by the scientist Dr. Frankenstein. In the original story by the English writer Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, Dr. Frankenstein used portions of dead bodies to create a figure shaped like a man and then gave the creature the power to move and think by activating him with electricity.

Frankenstein

Poem by Edward Field

1. **READ** ▶ As you read lines 1–12, begin to collect and cite text evidence.

- Underline details that describe the monster's appearance.
- Circle the pronouns the speaker uses to refer to the monster.
- In the margin, explain why the villagers think the monster is dangerous.

CLOSE READ
Notes

The monster has escaped from the dungeon
where he was kept by the Baron,
who made him with knobs sticking out from each side of his neck
where the head was attached to the body

5 and stitching all over
where parts of cadavers were sewed together.

He is pursued by the ignorant villagers,
who think he is evil and dangerous because he is ugly
and makes ugly noises.

10 They wave firebrands at him and cudgels and rakes,
but he escapes and comes to the thatched cottage
of an old blind man playing on the violin Mendelssohn's
"Spring Song."

Hearing him approach, the blind man welcomes him:

“Come in, my friend,” and takes him by the arm.

15 “You must be weary,” and sits him down inside the house.

For the blind man has long dreamed of having a friend
to share his lonely life.

The monster has never known kindness—the Baron was cruel—
but somehow he is able to accept it now,

20 and he really has no instincts to harm the old man,

for in spite of his awful looks he has a tender heart:

Who knows what cadaver that part of him came from?

The old man seats him at table, offers him bread,

and says, “Eat, my friend.” The monster

25 rears back roaring in terror.

“No my friend, it is good. Eat—gooood”

and the old man shows him how to eat,

and reassured, the monster eats

and says, “Eat—gooood,”

30 trying out the words and finding them good too.

2. **◀ REREAD** Reread lines 7–12. Does the speaker share the villagers' view that the monster is evil and dangerous? Support your answer with explicit textual evidence.

3. **▶ READ** As you read lines 13–30, continue to cite textual evidence.

- Circle details that suggest the blind man's kindness to the monster.
- Underline phrases that describe the monster's personality.
- In the margin, write the reason the monster “rears back roaring in terror” (line 25).

The old man offers him a glass of wine,
“Drink, my friend. Drink—good.”
The monster drinks, slurping horribly, and says,
“Drink—good,” in his deep nutty voice
35 and smiles maybe for the first time in his life.

Then the blind man puts a cigar in the monster’s mouth
and lights a large wooden match that flares up in his face.
The monster, remembering the torches of the villagers,
recoils, grunting in terror.
40 “No, my friend, smoke—good,”
and the old man demonstrates with his own cigar.
The monster takes a tentative puff
and smiles hugely, saying, “Smoke—good,”
and sits back like a banker, grunting and puffing.

45 Now the old man plays Mendelssohn’s “Spring Song” on the violin
while tears come into our dear monster’s eyes
as he thinks of the stones of the mob, the pleasures of mealtime,
the magic new words he has learned
and above all of the friend he has found.

4. **◀ REREAD** Reread lines 13–30. Explain why the old man is quick to welcome the monster into his house. Support your answer with explicit textual evidence.

5. **▶ READ** As you read lines 31–55, cite additional textual evidence.
- Circle actions by the old man that are similar to those he has made before.
 - Underline details that reveal how happy the monster is.
 - In the margin, restate what will happen to the monster when the mob finds him.

